Faunitaxys

Revue de Faunistique, Taxonomie et Systématique morphologique et moléculaire

Volume 13
Numéro 29

Juin 2025

ISSN (Print) : 2269 - 6016
ISSN (Online) : 2970 - 4960
Dépôt légal : Juin 2025

Faunitaxys

Revue de Faunistique, Taxonomie et Systématique morphologique et moléculaire

ZooBank : https://zoobank.org/79A36B2E-F645-4F9A-AE2B-ED32CE6771CC

Directeur de la publication, rédacteur, conception graphique et PAO:
Lionel Delaunay

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La parution de *Faunitaxys* est apériodique

Faunitaxys est indexé dans / ***Faunitaxys*** is indexed in:
- Zoological Record
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- ZooBank (https://zoobank.org)
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Imprimée sur les presses de SPEED COPIE, 6, rue Tréfilerie, F- 42100 Saint-Etienne

Imprimé le 29 06 2025

The Ochodaeidae of Israel: A taxonomic review with key to species and updated distribution (Coleoptera: Scarabaeoidea)

JEAN-BERNARD HUCHET

Institut Systématique, Evolution, Biodiversité (ISYEB), CNRS, MNHN, SU, EPHE, UA. Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, CP 50, 45 rue Buffon, F-75005 Paris, France. - E-mail : jean-bernard.huchet@mnhn.fr
- ZooBank : https://zoobank.org/AD63F3ED-5BCD-499C-8A10-DD29EA962CA4 – Orcid : https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3906-6934

Keywords:

Coleoptera;
Scarabaeoidea;
Ochodaeidae;
Ochodaeus;
taxonomy;
faunistics;
Israel.

Abstract. – The Ochodaeidae fauna of Israel is reviewed, with three valid species recognized: *Ochodaeus (Ochodaeus) berytensis* Petrovitz, 1965, *O. (O.) gigas* Marseul, 1878, and *O. (Diplochodaeus) alleonis* Fairmaire, 1884. Previous records of *O. cornifrons* Solsky, 1876 and *O. inscutellaris* Pic, 1900 are now considered misidentifications: the former is restricted to Central Asian mountains, while the latter was recently synonymized with *O. alleonis* (Huchet & Hillert, 2025). A revised species list is presented, along with an identification key and updated distribution map. Preliminary observations indicate that these species exhibit contrasting diel activity patterns, from strict nocturnality to predominant diurnality. This study provides a revised taxonomic and distributional framework for the Israeli Ochodaeidae and serves as a basis for further taxonomic and ecological research on this taxon in the region.

Huchet J.-B., 2025. – The Ochodaeidae of Israel: A taxonomic review with key to species and updated distribution (Coleoptera: Scarabaeoidea). *Faunitaxys*, 13(29) : 1 – 8.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.57800/faunitaxys-13(29)

ZooBank: https://zoobank.org/8256D63D-208C-4320-86A0-B05A47D31E1F

Received: 04/05/2025 – *Revised*: 19/05/2025 – *Accepted*: 20/05/2025

Introduction

The Ochodaeidae, a relatively small family within Scarabaeoidea, currently comprise about 155 extant species worldwide, distributed among 16 genera and grouped into two subfamilies (Carlson and Ritcher 1974; Paulian 1976; Scholtz and Evans 1987; Scholtz *et al.* 1988; Nikolajev 1995, 2009; López-Colon *et al.* 2006; Paulsen 2007; Paulsen and Ocampo 2012; Ochi *et al.* 2013, 2021, 2022; Nikolajev & Bezděk 2016; Huchet 2016, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2024; Huchet & Keith 2017; Huchet & Hillert 2025 *inter alia*). While relatively well-represented in arid and semi-arid regions, the family remains poorly known in many parts of its range due to the cryptic habits of its members and a general lack of comprehensive faunistic treatments. In the Palaearctic region, the genus *Ochodaeus* Dejean, 1821 constitutes the most diverse lineage, yet its taxonomy remains problematic, with several species historically misidentified or misapplied (see Huchet & Lencina Gutierrez 2024; Huchet & Hillert 2025).

In Israel, four species of *Ochodaeus* have been historically recorded: *Ochodaeus gigas* Marseul, 1878, *O. berytensis* Petrovitz, 1965, *O. cornifrons* Solsky, 1876, and *O. inscutellaris* Pic, 1900 (Chikatunov & Pavlíček, 1997). Recent taxonomic revision of the *O. cornifrons* complex (Huchet & Hillert, 2025) has clarified that *O. cornifrons* is in fact restricted to mountainous areas of Central Asia and does not occur in the Levant. Moreover, *O. inscutellaris*, originally described from Jericho, was shown to be a junior synonym of *O. alleonis* Fairmaire, 1884. As a result, only three valid species are currently recognized within the Israeli fauna: *O. (O.) berytensis*, *O. (O.) gigas* and *O. (D.) alleonis*.

The aim of the present work is to provide an updated review of the Ochodaeidae of Israel, incorporating recent taxonomic advances, and to present a revised checklist, an illustrated identification key, and a distribution map for the three valid species. Brief ecological notes are also included, as preliminary observations suggest contrasting nycthemeral activity patterns among the species. Given the clear external diagnostic characters separating the three species, illustrations of the male genitalia are deemed unnecessary and are therefore not included. This study lays the foundation for future ecological and biogeographic investigations of Ochodaeidae in the Levant.

Material and Methods

The 326 specimens examined originate from the following institutional and private collections:

CJBH: Jean-Bernard Huchet collection, Bordeaux, France;
CSZF: Stefano Ziani collection, Faenza, Italy;
MHNG: Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de Genève, Switzerland;
MNHN: Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, France;
NHMW: Naturhistorisches Museum, Wien, Austria;
SMNH: Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Label data of type specimens are transcribed verbatim, with each label denoted by a letter (a, b, etc.), and each line of the label separated by a slash.

Reviewers :

Alberto Ballerio (*Brescia, Italie*) - https://zoobank.org/B42928A1-41ED-47C9-AE68-2EDC006BF86E - https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9772-976X

Frank-Thorsten Krell (*Gillette Museum of Arthropod Diversity, Colorado State University, Department of Agricultural Biology, USA*) - https://zoobank.org/06FF0148-DF65-49E0-AD79-560075DC466F - https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6065-0812

Ariel-Leib-Leonid Friedman (*Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Tel Aviv University, Israel*) - https://zoobank.org/307AD193-4D93-46AF-80C1-C769DB2DF4B0 - https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4389-6858

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Illustrations. – Digital images of the habitus and external morphological parts were taken at the Terrestrial Arthropods department (Collections management, MNHN, Paris, France) with a Canon E0S 6D digital camera (zoom MP-E 65 mm) mounted on a Kaiser RTx column. The z-stepper was controlled through the focus stacking software Helicon Remote 3.8.6w and images were processed using Helicon focus 8. The digital images were then imported into Adobe Photoshop CC 2019 and Adobe Illustrator CS4 for post-processing, labeling and plate composition.

Taxonomy

Ochodaeidae Streubel, 1846: 960

Ochodaeinae Streubel, 1846: 960

Ochodaeini Streubel, 1846: 960

Ochodaeus Dejean, 1821: 56

Subgenus ***Ochodaeus*** Dejean, 1821

Ochodaeus* (*Ochodaeus*) *berytensis Petrovitz, 1965

(Fig. 1, 2, 6)

Ochodaeus berytensis Petrovitz, 1965: 681. – Chikatunov & Pavlíček, 1997: 41. – Finkel *et al.*, 2002: 81. – López-Colón *et al.*, 2006: 95 (catalogue). – Pittino, 2006: 79. – Nikolajev & Bezděk, 2016: 84 (catalogue). – Huchet *et al.*, 2022: 913.

Type material examined

Holotype, ♀, NHMW, glued to a mounting card, labels: (a) white rectangular cardboard, printed: "10-15. V. 1963 / Dünen S v. / Beirut. Libanon / Kasy & Vartian"; (b) red rectangular cardboard, printed: "TYPUS"; (c) red rectangular cardboard, printed: "Ochodaeus / berytensis m. / Petrovitz"; d) white rectangular cardboard, printed: "NHMW-ZOO- / COL-0002640".

Other specimens examined (**290** ex.)

ISRAEL

Upper Galilee

- Tel Dan, 15.VI.2002, light trap, V. Kravchenko (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- Elon, 9.III.1970, leg. Schweiger / *Ochodaeus berytensis*, det. Petrovitz (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- Nahal Keziv, 12.IV.2006, light trap, V. Kravchenko, V. Chikatunov (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- Nahal Kziv, 20.II.1999, M. Finkel (**1** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 24.IV.1999 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 9.IV.1999 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 8.V.1999 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 4.VI.1999 (**2** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 17.VI.2000 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- Nahal Keziv, Upper Galilee, close Montfort, 11.V.2010, trap 4, 33°02'43" / 35°13'24", semi-dry, leg. C. Drees (**1** ex. / CJBH; **1** ex. / CSZF);
- Nahal Keziv, 10.V.2020, M. Finkel & H. Inbar (**3** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 28.V.2020 (**2** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 10.VII.2020 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- IL, Nahal Kziv NR, cca 253 m, Montfort castle env., 33°2'40.48"N, 35°13'33.72"E, 17.-23.V.2017, Martin Just leg., / *Ochodaeus berytensis* [???] [sic!] Petrovitz, 1965, det. A. Bezděk, 2019 (**1** unsexed / IECA);
- Bar'am, 15.XI.2016, 262154, ex. truffle, O. Danai, N. Ezov (**1** ♂ / SMNH; **1** ex. / CJBH);
  ditto, n° 262155 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- Matityahu Reserve station, on *Tuber aestivum*, IV-2019, L. Azoulay leg. (**10** ex. / CJBH);
- Bar'am forest (Oak), truffle plantation (by trap), IV-2019, L. Azoulay leg. (**82** ex. / MNHN & CJBH);
- Bar'am (natural forest), 7-V-2019 (by trap), L. Azoulay leg. (**50** ex. / MNHN & CJBH);
  ditto, 27-VII-2019 (**45** ex. / MNHN & CJBH);
- Bar'am forest, old-growth woodland, 262746, 33°02'N 35°25'E, 674 m, 16.VI.2005, A. Timm, T. Assman (**1** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, n° 262745 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 26.IV.2005, n° 262739 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 25.VI.2005, n° 262720 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 26.XII.2005, n° 262774 (**1** ♂ / SMNH);
  ditto, 6.II.2006, n° 262790 (**1** ♂ / SMNH);
  ditto, 6.II.2006, n° 262791 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 6.II.2006, n° 262792 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- Ziv'on, batha, 33°01'N / 35°21'E, 85193, 16.IV.2005, pitfall, A. Timm, T. Assmann (**1** ex. / SMNH);

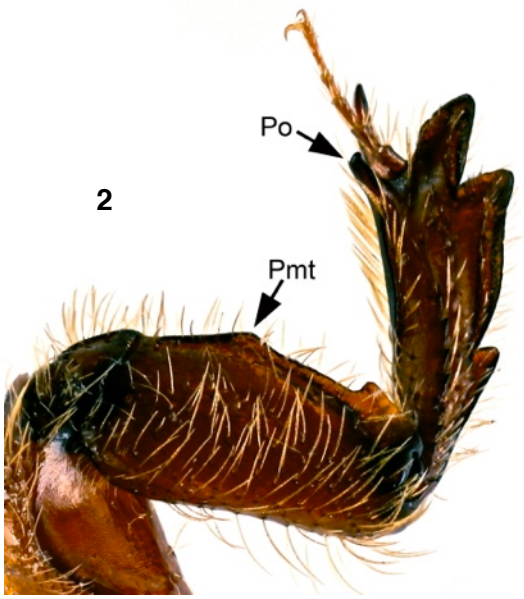

Fig. **1-2**. *Ochodaeus (Ochodaeus) berytensis* Petrovitz, 1965.

1. Habitus, dorsal view (Photo: J.-B. Huchet, MNHN, 2020). **2**. Male, foreleg. Abbreviations: **Pmt** = profemoral medial tooth; **Po** = pollex. (Photo: J.-B. Huchet, MNHN, 2022).

- Hurfeish, batha, 33°01'N 35°21'E, 16.IV.2005, 85221, Pitfall, A. Timm, T. Assmann (**1** ex. / SMNH);
  ditto, 6.VI.2005 (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- 'En Ya'aqov, 19.III.2007, I. Shtirberg (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- Har Meron, above Field School, 4-11.IV.2007, T. Levanony (**2** ex. / SMNH);
- Har Meron, 2.VII.2002, light trap, V. Kravchenko (**1** ex. / SMNH):
  ditto, 12.VII.2002 (**3** ex. / SMNH);
- Har Meron, 20.IV.2002, light trap, V. Kravchenko (**2** ex. / SMNH):
- Har Meron, 5.X.2002, light trap, V. Kravchenko, V. Chikatunov (**1** ex. / SMNH);

Golan Heights

- Mas'ade, 25.IV.2002, V. Kravchenko (**16** ex. / SMNH & CJBH);
- Odem forest, 33°12'N 35°44'E, 5.VI.2009, leg. G. Sabatinelli (**1** ex. / CSZF);
- Buq'ata, 1.VIII.2002, 4663, V. Kravchenko, V. Chikatunov (**7** ex. / SMNH & CJBH);

Carmel Ridge

- Nahal Oren, 24.II.1998, light, V. Chikatunov, T. Pavliček (**2** ex. / SMNH);
- Nahal Oren, 4.VI.1999, NFS6, light trap, V. Chikatunov, T. Pavliček (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- Nahal Oren, 09.V.2010, trap 6, northfacing slope, 32°42'52" / 34°59'33", semi-dry, leg. C. Drees (**1** ex. / CJBH; **1**ex. / CSZF);
  ditto, trap 4 (**2** ex. / CSZF);

Judean Hills

- Zur Hadassa, 31.III.2001, Y. Mandelik (**18** ex. / SMNH);
- Matta', 19.IV.2007, I. Shtirberg (**1** ex. / SMNH);

Foothills of Judea

- 'Adullam, 15.V.2008, O. Skutelsky / *Ochodaeus berytensis*, det. V. Chikatunov (**1** ♂, **1** ♀ / SMNH);
- 'Adullam, 16.V.2008, O. Skutelsky (**2** ex. / SMNH).

Distribution. – Israel, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan

Brief redescription

Relatively variable in size. Length 4.6–7.6 mm. Body unicolor, entirely pubescent, dorsally and ventrally shiny orange-brown to chestnut brown.

Head. – Transverse. Clypeus transverse, broadly rounded anteriorly, finely bordered and darkened along margin; clypeofrontal suture straight, deeply impressed, forming a pronounced transverse groove reaching the upper eye margin laterally. Labrum thick, broadly emarginate anteriorly. Eyes convex, subspherical, relatively small, diameter about equal to length of genae. Cephalic punctation coarse, squamose. Antennae: scape orange-yellow; club yellowish except darkened inner segment basally.

Pronotum. – Convex, fully bordered, punctation similar to that of the head.

Elytra. – With well-marked striae of medium-sized, closely spaced punctures; interstriae flat with 4–5 rows of setigerous granules. Humeral callus well developed. Scutellum triangular, tongue-shaped, apex rounded.

Legs. – Protibiae tridentate. Profemora with sharp flat tooth near femorotibial joint (inward-directed) and medial, obtusely rounded tooth forming a flattened triangular bulge in male. Meso- and metafemora each with a sharp flat tooth near femorotibial joint; metafemoral tooth larger with denticulate upper edge.

Genitalia. – Aedeagus with elongate, dorsoventrally curved phallobase, acuminate at apex; parameres short, symmetrical. Endophallus with three endophallites: two broad serrated plates and one smaller, arch-shaped apical endophallite with denticulate apex.

Sexual dimorphism (Fig. 2). – Male: profemur with a medial, obtusely rounded tooth forming a flattened triangular bulge. Pollex [distal tooth located at the junction of the internal apical spur of the protibia] flat in cross-section, slightly concave dorsally in males; round in section, regularly pointed apically in females.

Comparative diagnosis. – *Ochodaeus berytensis* is easily distinguished from the two other species by its robust habitus, very transverse clypeus, and the absence of a clypeal horn in both sexes.

Ecology and trophic association. – *Ochodaeus berytensis* has recently been identified as a mycetophagous pest infesting *Tuber aestivum* truffle orchards in Upper Galilee (Israel) (Huchet *et al*. 2022). Adult beetles actively feed on mature truffle fruit bodies, boring tunnels and cavities that significantly compromise their commercial value. While the beetles were consistently found within the sporophores, no immature stages were detected, suggesting that the species does not complete its life cycle in the truffle itself, but rather uses it as a feeding resource. This represents the first confirmed association between an Ochodaeidae species and a hypogeous fungus, providing direct evidence of mycophagy within this family. The seasonal infestation peaks between April and July and affects both cultivated and nearby natural habitats, underscoring the potential threat this species poses to truffle farming in the Mediterranean region.

Ochodaeus* (*Ochodaeus*) *gigas Marseul, 1878

(Fig. 3, 4, 6)

Ochodaeus gigas Marseul, 1878: 58. – Arrow 1912: 21. – Baraud, 1985: 87. – Scholtz & Evans, 1987: 410. – Chikatunov & Pavlíček, 1997: 41. – Dupuis, 2005: 761. – López-Colón *et al.*, 2006: 95 (catalogue). – Nikolajev & Bezděk, 2016: 85 (catalogue). – Huchet *et al.*, 2022: 913.
Ochodaeus harterti Reitter *in* Heyden, 1913: 105 (synonymized by Baraud, 1985: 88).

Type material examined

Holotype, ♂, (MNHN), pinned specimen, labels: (a) Circular, blue, handwritten (in Marseul's hand): "Ochodaeus / n. gigas m. / Ouargla / 1[8?]54"; (b) Rectangular, pale blue, printed label: "MUSEUM PARIS / coll. / DE MARSEUL"; (c) Rectangular, red, printed: "TYPE"; (d) Rectangular, white, handwritten and printed: "Holotype / Ochodaeus gigas / Mars. / J. B. Huchet det. 2025".

Other specimens examined (**28** ex.)

ISRAEL

Upper Galilee

- Har Meron, 15.III.2002, V. Kravchenko (2 ex. / SMNH);
  idem but 20.IV.2002 (**1** ♀ / SMNH);

Central Coastal Plain

- Tel Aviv, 12.XI.2002, V. Kravchenko, V. Chikatunov (**2** ♂ / SMNH);
  idem but 12.IV.2003 (**2** ♂, **1** ♀ / SMNH);
- Tel Aviv, 3.II.1978, A. Freidberg (**1** ex. / SMNH);

Southern Coastal Plain

- Nizzanim, 2.IV.2001, V. Chikatunov (**1** ♂, **1** ♀ / CJBH; **1** ♂, **1** ♀, **1** ex. / SMNH);
  idem but 15.I.2002 (1 ex. / SMNH);
- Nizzanim, 23.I.2003, light trap, V. Kravchenko, V. Chikatunov (**1** ex. / SMNH);

North Negev

- Retamim, 28.XI.2002, light, V. Kravchenko, V. Chikatunov (**1** ♂ / SMNH);
  idem but 5.VI.2003, light trap (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- Israel, Retamim, 12.VI.2002, light trap, V. Kravchenko (**1** ex. / SMNH);
- N. Negev, Retamim, Fenix, 5.V.2002, V. Kravchenko / *Ochodaeus cornifrons* det. V. Chikatunov (**1** ♀ CJBH; **3** ex. / SMNH);

Central Negev

- 'Ezuz, 15.III.2003, light trap, V. Kravchenko, V. Chikatunov (**1** ♀ / CJBH; **1** ex. SMNH);
- 'En Zin, 18.III.2001, light trap, V. Kravchenko, I. Yarom (**1** ♂ / SMNH);
- Israel, 'En Zin, 27.II.2001, V. Chikatunov (**1** ex. / SMNH);

Arava Valley

- Israel, Shezaf Nat. Res., 17.III.2001, light trap, V. Kravchenko, I. Yarom (**1** ♀ / SMNH).

Distribution. – *Ochodaeus gigas* is mainly found in desert regions of North Africa and the Middle East, including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia **(new country record)**. Given its current distribution, the species is likely to be present in adjacent countries, including Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

Brief redescription

Relatively variable in size. Length 4.5–9.0 mm. Body light reddish-brown to yellowish-brown; anterior clypeal margin, pronotal margins, elytral suture, and outer margins narrowly darkened.

Head. – Distinctly transverse, width across eyes at least three times greater than median length. Punctation dense, coarse, granulose; surface setose. Clypeus very short, anterior margin flattened, not emarginate, with small central horn laterally compressed and connected to margin by a ridge. Clypeofrontal suture obscured by base of horn. Labrum deeply emarginate, setose. Eyes large, globose, laterally produced.

Pronotum. – Coarsely, irregularly punctate; punctation dense and rugose on disc, granulose antero-laterally, surface with short, erect setae.

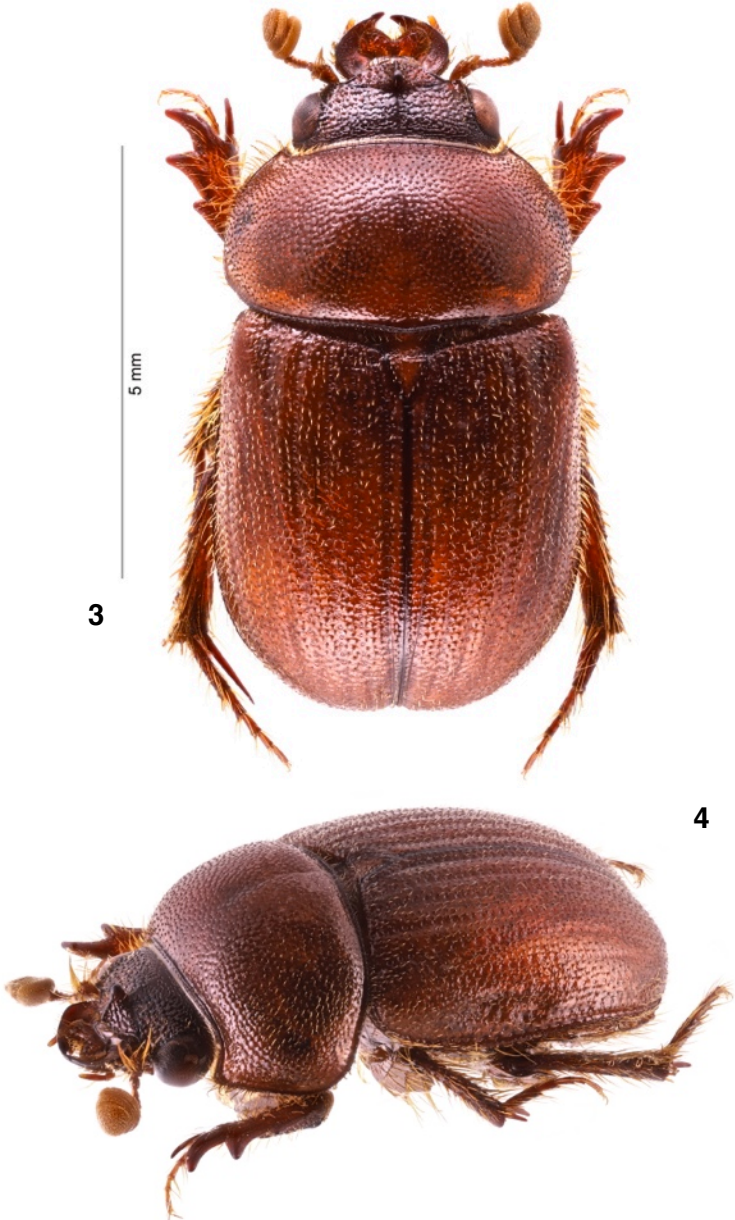

Fig. 3-4. *Ochodaeus* (*Ochodaeus*) *gigas* Marseul, 1878, habitus (Photo: J.-B. Huchet, MNHN, 2025). **3**. Dorsal view. **4**. Laterodorsal view.

Elytra. – With large humeral calli; striae fine, distinct; interstriae densely and deeply punctate, each puncture anteriorly bordered by a strong granule; surface with short, erect setae. Scutellum with parallel sides at base.

Legs. – Protibiae tridentate, basal tooth smaller. Profemora with small curved tooth at apex of infero-anterior margin; males with additional blunt tooth at mid-infero-anterior edge. Meso- and metafemora with similar tooth at apex of infero-posterior margin. Metatibia slender with median row of spines.

Abdomen. – Sternites sclerotized with distinct dorsolateral margin; stridulatory peg present.

Genitalia. – Aedeagus with elongate, dorsoventrally curved phallobase, acuminate at apex; parameres short, symmetrical, slightly diverging apically. Endophallus with four serrated endophallites, unequal in size, grouped near base.

Sexual dimorphism. – Weakly developed. Pollex usually shaped as a small, round-sectioned spur, apically pointed and curved outward in its apical third in males; in females, it takes the form of a small, flat, triangular tooth. Major males typically exhibit a profemur bearing a broad, blunt, yet discreet tooth at mid-length; this tooth may be barely visible or even absent in minor males.

Comparative diagnosis. – In this species, the most distinctive character is the large clypeal horn, from the base of which arises a longitudinal carina extending to the anterior margin of the clypeus, giving a triangular profile in lateral view (Fig. 3, 4). The eyes, large, subspherical and globose, occupy nearly the entire width of the head. In contrast, the eyes are distinctly smaller in *O. berytensis*, with their diameter equal to or less than the length of the genae, and reniform in lateral view in *O.* (*Diplochodaeus*) *alleonis*).

Subgenus ***Diplochodaeus*** Huchet & Hillert, 2025: 118

Ochodaeus* (*Diplochodaeus*) *alleonis Fairmaire, 1884

(Fig. 5, 6)

Ochodaeus alleonis Fairmaire, 1884: 218. – Seidlitz, 1891: 153. – Reitter, 1892: 109. – Koenig, 1904: 142. – Anonymous, 1907: 304. – Arrow, 1912: 21 [catalogue]. – Schmidt, 1913: 54 [catalogue]. – Olsoufieff, 1918: 31. – Winkler, 1929 [1924–1932]: 1063 [catalogue]. – Panin, 1957: 220. – López-Colón, 2003: 140.
Ochodaeus alleoni [sic] Frm. – Marseul, 1886: 224. – Semenov-Tian-Shanskii, 1914: 22. – Iablokoff-Khnzorian, 1967: 63.
Ochodaeus cornifrons Solsky, 1876. – Nikolajev, 1987: 130. – Baraud, 1992: 98. – Guéorguiev & Bunalski, 2004: 270. – López-Colón et al., 2006: 95 [catalogue]. – Tauzin, 2015: 174. – Shokhin, 2019: 67.
Ochodaeus (*Diplochodaeus*) *alleonis* Fairmaire, 1884. – Huchet & Hillert, 2025: 131.
Ochodaeus inscutellaris Pic, 1900: 6. – junior synonym of *O. alleonis* (Huchet & Hillert, 2025: 132).
Ochodaeus graecus Petrovitz, 1968: 49. – junior synonym of *O. alleonis* (Huchet & Hillert, 2025: 132).

Type material examined

Lectotype, ♀, NMNHS, specimen glued on paper card, dissected, the genitalia stored in a microvial containing glycerin pinned under the specimen. Labels: (a), rectangular, framed, handwritten: "Dobrodja"; (b) rectangular, yellowed paper, handwritten: "Ochodaeus / Alleonis Fairm. / N. S."; (c) white, rectangular, printed: "♀"; (d) red, rectangular, printed: "LECTOTYPE"; (e) red, rectangular, printed: "*Ochodaeus alleonis* Fairmaire, 1884, LECTOTYPE, J.-B. Huchet des. 2024".

Other specimens examined (5 ex.)

ISRAEL

Central Coastal Plain

- Herzliyya, 13.II., leg. Bytinski. Solz., coll. Petrovitz, inscutellaris (**1** ♀ / MHNG);

- Herzliyya, hill, 32°11′N 34°49′E, 7.III.2008, A. Freidberg (**1** ♂ / SMNH > CJBH);

- Herzliyya, hill, 32°11′N 34°49′E, 17.III.2012, A. Freidberg, 120418 (**1** ♀ / SMNH);
- Tel Aviv, Abu Kabbir, 25.III.2025, G. Pisanty (**1** ♂ / SMNH);

Jordan Valley

-50 m, Umm Zuqa Nature Reserve, Rt. 5788, 18.III.2008, V. Chikatunov (**1** ♀ / SMNH).

Remark about *Ochodaeus inscutellaris* Pic, 1900

Described from the Jordan Valley, near Jericho, on the bank of the Jordan River (approx. 31°52′0″N 35°27′0″E), *Ochodaeus inscutellaris* was based on a single specimen, the holotype of which is no longer present in Pic's collection housed at the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (MNHN) and is presumed lost. The study of four specimens from Israel that match the original description has enabled clarification of the taxonomic status of this species. As concluded by Huchet & Hillert (2025), *O. inscutellaris* should be regarded as a junior synonym of *O. alleonis* Fairmaire, 1884.

Brief redescription

Relatively variable in size. Length 4.5–7.3 mm. Habitus consistently bicolored: pronotum black, elytra reddish brown.

Head. – Transverse. Clypeus subrectilinear to slightly concave medially, then strongly sinuate toward the antero-internal eye margins; small horn present in both sexes, contiguous with anterior margin. Labrum deeply emarginate. Eyes reduced, reniform. Mentum with narrow anteromedian depression. Gula convex. Cephalic punctation scale-like with contiguous setiferous granules.

Pronotum. – Transverse, fully bordered, black, widest at base; basal margin with dense yellowish setae; disc punctation dense and granulate.

Elytra. – Short, punctate-striate; interstriae with rugose background and 3–4 more or less aligned rows of punctures. Juxta-sutural interval depressed behind scutellum, then raised into a carina extending to the apex; often bearing a dark triangular patch nearly reaching apex. Apex subrectilinear in posterior view. Humeral callus distinct. Scutellum black, narrow, elongate.

Genitalia. – Aedeagus with elongate, dorsoventrally curved phallobase, acuminate at apex; parameres short, symmetrical. Endophallus with three serrated endophallites in transverse plates, serrated along convex margin.

Sexual dimorphism. – Males with prominent medial tooth on profemur and an inner notch on protibiae just behind the pollex.

Comparative diagnosis. – *Ochodaeus alleonis* is easily distinguished from the two other species by its bicolored habitus, reniform eyes (regularly convex and globular in *Ochodaeus berytensis* and *O. gigas*), elongate scutellum, and the presence of a small clypeal horn in both sexes. *O. gigas* also bears a clypeal horn, but it is distinctly more developed and not contiguous with anterior margin. In *O. berytensis*, the clypeus is unarmed.

Fig. 5. *Ochodaeus* (*Diplochodaeus*) *alleonis* Fairmaire, 1884. Habitus, dorsal view (Photo: J.-B. Huchet, MNHN, 2025).

Taxonomic and ecological notes

Huchet and Hillert (2025) proposed the subgenus *Diplochodaeus* to accommodate species of the *Ochodaeus cornifrons* complex sharing a unique combination of morphological traits: bicolored habitus, reduced reniform eyes, a small clypeal horn present in both sexes, rounded and well-separated cephalic and pronotal granules, a basal notch bearing an internal tooth on the male protibia, and a basal position of the endophallites in the everted endophallus.

Among the three species of *Ochodaeus* currently recorded in Israel, *O.* (*Diplochodaeus*) *alleonis* is unquestionably the least frequently collected. While *O. berytensis* and *O. gigas* are regularly captured using light traps, *O. alleonis* has only been recorded sporadically, and remains known from very few specimens in the region. As noted by Huchet & Hillert (2025), the distinctly reniform (kidney-shaped) eyes of *O. alleonis* contrast with the globular eyes observed in the other two species, which are primarily nocturnal and strongly attracted to artificial light. In contrast, the eye morphology of *O. alleonis* is consistent with

Diagnostic key to the Ochodaeidae species occurring in Israel

1. Bicolored habitus (black pronotum, reddish-brown elytra); eyes reniform in lateral view; small clypeal horn present in both sexes, aligned with anterior margin of clypeus; scutellum narrow, elongate, triangular . . . . . ***Ochodaeus*** (***Diplochodaeus***) ***alleonis*** Fairmaire, 1884

— Monochrome habitus (coloration ranging from orange-brown, reddish-brown to dark brown); eyes evenly convex; scutellum broad, short, triangular **2**

2. Eyes large, globose, occupying nearly the entire width of the head. Clypeus bearing a well-developed small horn, prolonged anteriorly as a longitudinal carina reaching the anterior margin of the clypeus. Scutellum with parallel sides at base . . . . . ***Ochodaeus*** (***Ochodaeus***) ***gigas*** Marseul, 1878

— Eyes of reduced size, diameter equal to or less than length of genae; clypeus very transverse, unarmed in both sexes. Scutellum forming a triangular, tongue-shaped plate, apically rounded . . . . . ***Ochodaeus*** (***Ochodaeus***) ***berytensis*** Petrovitz, 1965

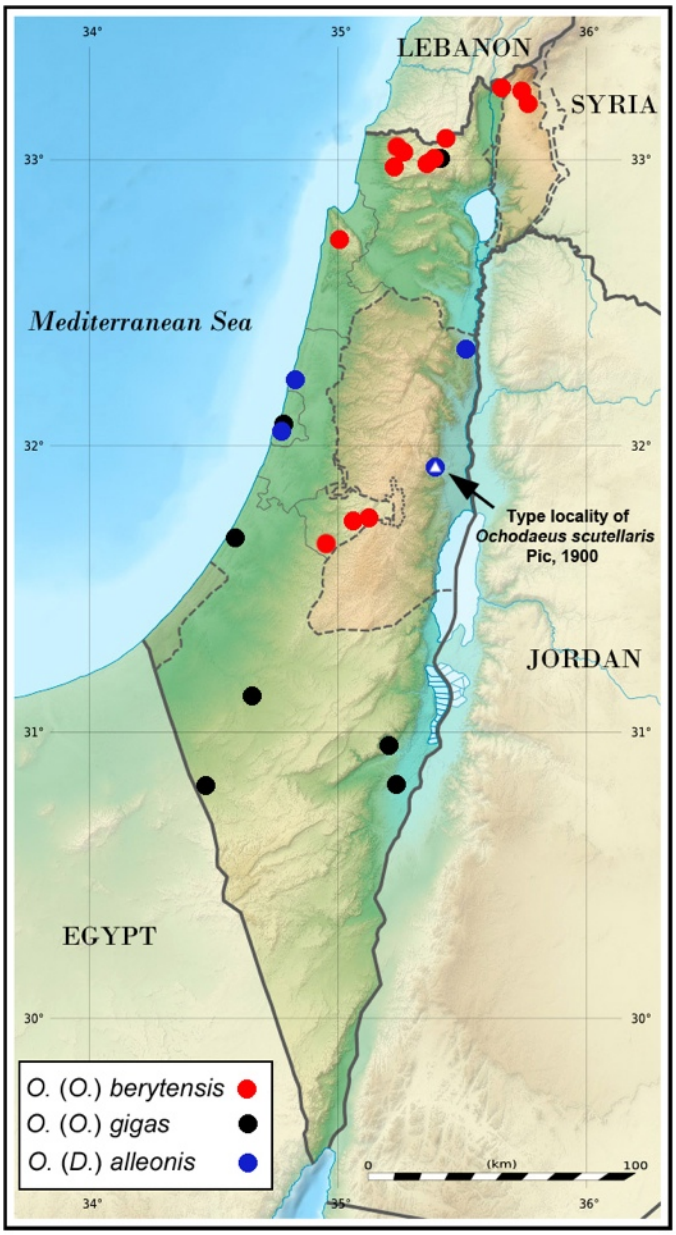

Fig. 6. Distribution map of Ochodaeidae species occurring in Israel (J.-B. Huchet).

diurnal activity—a correlation also highlighted by Král *et al.* (2018: 8) in reference to specimens identified as *O. cornifrons* from the Balkan Peninsula, which, as clarified by Huchet & Hillert, in fact correspond to *O. alleonis* (*O. cornifrons* being restricted to Central Asia).

Acknowledgements

I express my sincere gratitude to Laibale Friedman (Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Tel Aviv, Israel) for granting access to the entire Ochodaeidae collection under his care. I am also indebted to the curators of the following institutions for providing access to type material: B. Guéorguiev (National Museum of Natural History, Sofia, Bulgaria), O. Montreuil and A. Mantilleri (Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, France), and M. Seidel (Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria). I further thank Lotem Azoulay (Plant Protection Unit, Northern R&D, MIGAL, Kiryat Shmona, Israel) for generously supplying a large number of *Ochodaeus berytensis* specimens collected in traps or directly from *Tuber aestivum* truffles, primarily at the Bar'am truffle farm and the Matityahu Reserve station (Israel). I am especially grateful to my colleague Stefano Ziani (Meldola, Italy) for making his private collection available for study. I also wish to warmly thank Alberto Ballerio (Brescia, Italy), Frank-Thorsten Krell (Gillette Museum of Arthropod Diversity, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, USA), and Laibale Friedman (Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Tel Aviv, Israel) for kindly reviewing the manuscript and for their valuable comments and suggestions.

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La faune des Ochodaeidae d'Israël est révisée, avec trois espèces valides reconnues : *Ochodaeus (Ochodaeus) berytensis* Petrovitz, 1965, *O*. (*O*.) *gigas* Marseul, 1878 et *O*. (*Diplochodaeus*) *alleonis* Fairmaire, 1884. Les mentions antérieures de *O. cornifrons* Solsky, 1876 et *O. inscutellaris* Pic, 1900 se révèlent erronées : *O. cornifrons* est en réalité restreint aux montagnes d'Asie centrale, tandis que *O. inscutellaris* est un synonyme junior de *O. alleonis* (Huchet & Hillert, 2025). Une liste révisée des espèces est proposée, accompagnée d'une clé d'identification et d'une carte de distribution actualisée. Des observations préliminaires suggèrent que ces espèces présentent des régimes d'activité nycthémérale contrastés, allant d'un comportement strictement nocturne à une activité diurne dominante. Cette étude fournit un cadre taxonomique et biogéographique actualisé pour les Ochodaeidae d'Israël et constitue une base pour de futures recherches taxonomiques et écologiques dans la région.

Mots-clés. – Coleoptera, Scarabaeoidea, Ochodaeidae, *Ochodaeus*, taxonomie, faunistique, Israël.

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Illustration de la couverture :

Landscape view of the Umm Zuqa Nature Reserve in the Jordan Valley, natural habitat of *Ochodaeus (Diplochodaeus) alleonis*. (Photo © Ariel-Leib Friedman, SMNH, March 30, 2021)

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Jean-Bernard Huchet : Fig. 1-6.

Ariel-Leib Friedman (SMNH) : Couverture.

Publié par l'Association Française de Cartographie de la Faune et de la Flore (AFCFF)